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ABSTRACT

The history of consortia in American colleges and universities is traced, and the Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) is described as an example of a consortium. Additionally, the characteristics of formal consoritum arrangements are examined. The existence of a full-time professional administrator is one clear characteristic of a formal consortium arrangement. One administrative concern of the consortium is that the executive may make policy without the board. Six basic rules for executive officers are offered. The WIP is a special unit in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After 20 years, WIP is a consortium of 18 Wisconsin colleges and universities and the State Department of Public Instruction. The major focus of this consortium has been the administration of a teacher intern program for the member institutions. The following aspects of WIP are considered: organization, representation of member institutions in the decision making and administration, funding sources, research that has been conducted, and future research needs. The internship program is characterized by a team design. The undergraduate interns are assigned to a team of teachers, and one or more interns work as part of the team under the supervision of a principal and one or more experienced teachers. The design is flexible in organization, task assignment, scheduling, and planning. In conclusion, the need to develop a plan for research, for organizational effectiveness, and to deal with internal and external conflict is stressed. (SW)

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CONSORTIUM ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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CONSORTIUM ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Little has been written with respect to the administration of inter-institutional arrangements in higher education. Following a discussion of the history of consortia in American Colleges and Universities, research developments for one particular consortium will be explored.

History

The beginning of cooperative arrangements between institutions of higher education in the United States has been identified to be the formal federation of Claremont (Calif.) Colleges in 1925 (Wittich, 1962). Growth of the consortium concept was slow for the next thirty years. In fact, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) which includes the Big Ten institutions in the Midwest plus the University of Chicago claims to be one of thirteen original consortia founded before 1960 (CIC, 1978). Many cooperative endeavors, however, were launched with Sputnik and fueled by federal and foundation dollars in the decade of the 1960's.

These mushrooming umbrella groups were either formal structures with permanent staff or informal arrangements based upon a specific purpose for a specified duration. The formal structures developed an administrative hierarchy of an executive director and staff governed by a representative committee from member institutions. In fact, five specific criteria were postulated to identify a consortium. These were (1) a voluntary formal organization; (2) three or more member institutions; (3) multiacademic programs; (4) at least one full-time professional to administer consortium programs; and (5) a required annual contribution to evidence the commitment of member institutions (L. D. Patterson, 1970). The Big Ten CIC, mentioned earlier, fulfills all five criteria (CIC, 1978).

The criterion calling for multiacademic programs (#3) does not seem to be a necessary condition. Several formal interinstitutional agreements have been formed upon the basis of a specific program and have carried out their activities persuant to the objectives of a single academic goal. An example of this type of consortium is the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). This council began in 1959 with the basic mission of improving the professional preparation of administrative personnel in education. The UCEA is a voluntary formal organization, has 47 members, a full-time director with a central office staff, and annual service fees for member institutions.

The only missing element for UCEA from the postulated consortia criteria is the multiacademic programming. This criterion might be better stated to require an identified unifying goal or set of objectives for the cooperative venture. The UCEA and other formal cooperative arrangements with a single identified purpose should be considered bona fide consortia.

Administration

One clear characteristic of a formal consortium arrangement is the existence of a full-time professional administrator. This individual is usually referred to as a director, executive director, executive secretary, coordinator, or other such title. The duties of these officers vary in scope with the activities of the consortium, but a few common threads have been determined.

The executive officer should be a catalytic agent as well as a program officer. The executive officer must interact closely with members of the governing board of the consortium, and be responsible for the publication efforts, communication links, and budgetary matters of the group. Often

this director will take responsibility for outside resource development for the group (Donovan, 1964).

The executive officer acts as a catalyst in policy matters. Policy issues should be initiated by the director and, while not a member of the governing board or executive committee, the director should sit on this committee, act as secretary and, when reasonable, lead the discussion (Wittich, 1962). Policy is to be carried out by this executive officer so there is a vested interest in its formulation. The director can lead, however, only through persuasion (F. Patterson, 1974), since the real authority lies with the individual member institutions.

The consortium executive shares a responsibility for the mission and role of the organization. One administrative concern of the consortium arrangement is that the executive may make policy without the board. The imprecise distinction between policy and administration, and the likelihood that the executive may create and carry out policy without the board, can create tension between boards and executives (Tropman, 1980).

Six basic rules for executive officers have been offered. These are:

1. present a professional perspective
2. offer expertise where needed
3. keep the board informed of policy issues
4. work sensitively with board
5. offer development opportunities
6. work energetically with agency staff and link the board to the staff (Tropman, 1980, p. 61)

This paper will study the efforts of one consortium, and the executive officer of that group, to identify development opportunities and to embark on a structured course of self-examination. Critical self-study, review,

and redirection are essential elements for consortia to mount significant innovations, determine major shifts in emphasis, or improve existing governing structures (F. Patterson, 1974). The work that follows is an attempt to chart such a course for one consortium.

The Wisconsin Improvement Program

The Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) is a special unit in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. On April 1, 1959, the School of Education in Madison received a Ford Foundation award of $625,000 for the purpose of improving classroom instruction and teacher preparation in Wisconsin. This grant gave impetus to the formation of the Wisconsin Teacher Improvement Program which eventually became the WIP.

Three institutions joined with the UW-Madison in 1962 when a second Ford Foundation grant of $500,000 was approved for statewide expansion of WIP. After twenty years of change and growth, the Wisconsin Improvement Program today is a consortium of eighteen Wisconsin colleges and universities and the State Department of Public Instruction (hereafter referred to as member institutions). The major focus of this consortium has been the administration of a teacher intern program for the member institutions.

Organization

The School of Education, UW-Madison, from the initiation of the WIP in 1959-60, housed the office of the director and provided the business management facilities for processing the funds allocated by the Ford Foundation. Gradually, the University began to make contributions to the WIP until it was able to maintain the support for the activity at a quality desired without subsidies from the Foundation or other agencies. Eventually, a plan evolved and was consummated in 1969 which involved 11 members of the

University System, the State Department of Public Instruction, and six private colleges and universities for a cooperative program which includes a sharing of finances.

Each participating institution now makes a budgetary contribution which is sent to the University of Wisconsin and is budgeted in the School of Education, and by code, is allocated to the WIP. The participating institutions prepared and adopted a constitution which provides the structural and operational plan for a continuance of the program on this basis. The Executive Secretary of the WIP's organization was selected by the Executive Committee of the consortium and was recommended to the Dean of the School of Education for approval as a member of the UW-Madison School of Education Academic Staff.

The Wisconsin Improvement Program office staff consists of an Executive Secretary, an Administrative Assistant, and a Secretary-Stenographer. Working with professors, administrators, teachers, and interns, the office staff coordinates both intern placement and inservice requests as well as related administrative considerations. The administration and operation of the Wisconsin Improvement Program is financially supported by the member institutions in the consortium in that, for each intern placed, the member institution pays the Wisconsin Improvement Program ninety dollars. This fiscal arrangement supports and maintains the professional staff and services for the administration of programs within the consortium.

Representation

As provided by the Constitution of the Wisconsin Improvement Program, each of the member institutions is represented by one person in the Membership Assembly. This assembly meets every fall and spring to conduct general

business involving policy and program implementation in the consortium. The business agenda is developed by a six-person Executive Committee with the cooperation of the Executive Secretary. Elected by the member representatives, the Executive Committee consists of two University of Wisconsin System representatives, one private college representative, one representative from the State Department of Public Instruction, and two members-at-large. The Executive Committee meets as often as is necessary to insure the proper functioning of consortium activities. Each member institution also has a campus coordinator responsible for program administration on that campus. The campus coordinators meet regularly for cooperative efforts, such as placement of interns and for other programmatic business of mutual interest.

To help the Executive Secretary with policy and program development, Advisory Councils of Teachers and Administrators have also been established. The members of these two twelve-person advisory councils are selected to represent all participating school levels and diverse geographic areas. The term of office for members of both committees is on a three- or four-year rotating basis, with members appointed by the Executive Secretary, based on the recommendations of consortium personnel.

The Teacher Internship

The teacher intern program in Wisconsin has survived the initial Ford Foundation beginning and is now self-supporting. One unique aspect of this concept is the intern-in-team design. Interns are, for the most part, undergraduate students seeking their initial certification. They are assigned to a team of teachers in a school rather than to just one cooperating teacher. Team members are not paid a direct stipend by the participating institutions for their work with the interns.

Intern-in-team designs are cooperatively developed by the individual school systems and the member institutions with coordination rendered by the Wisconsin Improvement Program. Intern designs are unique in providing a realistic teaching experience which prepares the prospective teacher for the responsibilities of a full-time position. Within each design, one or more interns work as part of a team under the continuous supervision of a principal and one or more experienced teachers. Interns participate in the planning and programming for classroom instruction, as well as in all other responsibilities of teaching. The intern-in-team design is flexible in organization, task assignment, scheduling, and planning. Each design also provides rich opportunities for observation, analysis, and evaluation of instruction for the many talented team members.

During the intern-in-team semester, the intern is in the process of learning to teach as a member of a professional team. Within this instructional arrangement, the intern is assigned individual professional responsibility. The intern is continuously in contact with talented associates on the team who help provide rich opportunities for teaching and reflection.

The internship program has developed in scope from 38 interns in five school systems in 1960 to the current status of nearly 500 interns in over 100 public and private school systems in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. The eighteen member institutions make the initial selection of the interns individually. The local school then has the opportunity to interview and approve the intern for its specific design. The intern is licensed, paid a stipend, and assigned to a teaching team in an approved school system for one semester.

The Intern Fiscal Model

The present cost of an internship assignment for a school district is $2,300 per semester. This allocation includes $2,000 for the intern's stipend, $150 to support general inservice activities, and $150 to support local inservice activities--both of which are related to the internship. The general inservice amount is forwarded to the Wisconsin Improvement Program, and the local inservice portion remains at the unit school level.

Since implementation of the general inservice fund in 1972, over 200 projects have been approved annually by the Wisconsin Improvement Program from the funds school districts sent to that office. These inservice efforts, suggested by teachers, administrators, supervisors, professors, and even interns, extend beyond the individual school and its personnel. They have included summer workshops for cooperating teachers and interns, school district workshops, conference attendance, and many other activities. Over $500,000 has been expended through this fiscal model to support improved teacher education through the internship model. This fiscal component has been a positive influence on continued faculty involvement in the schools.

The local inservice component is retained by the school district for unit school inservice development. Its use is determined creatively and uniquely by the principal and team members of the unit school. This component has been used to support such things as conference attendance, purchase of instructional materials, orientation activities, and semester transition coordination.

Consortium Research

Research in the Wisconsin Improvement Program consortium has centered on survey research of participants on a continuous basis to judge program

value and effectiveness. A high degree of satisfaction has always been expressed by participants, with average values consistently greater than 4.4 on a five point scale.

When the variables communication, evaluation, orientation, and supervision were measured along with satisfaction, the interns attitude toward communication correlated closely ($r = .537$) with their satisfaction. In fact a regression analysis identified communication as the only significant variable in predicting satisfaction, accounting for approximately 37% of the variation in the response to satisfaction.

A follow-up survey indicated that the most meaningful communication took place with school-based personnel ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) rather than with campus-personnel ($\bar{x} = 3.62$). Thus, a decision was made, based upon these data, to offer a workshop reviewing communication techniques for school-based cooperating personnel funded through general inservice monies.

Intern and teacher reactions to planned future programs are also solicited. One such program is a fifth-year residency for teacher education graduates, and results of these surveys have helped to plan appropriate implementation stages for these programs (Burke, 1978; Burke and Stoltenberg, 1979; Stoltenberg, 1981).

Future Needs

Franklin Patterson states that "Very few consortia have seriously studied themselves with an eye toward substantial reorganization or revision" (F. Patterson, 1974, p. 58). Yet this type of study is essential for adequate forward planning for consortia to survive.

The Wisconsin Improvement Program is at a point of need regarding a study of organizational structure. This anticipated need supercedes the

research on programmatic aspects of the consortium that are mentioned above. Revision of organizational structure, however, cannot be accomplished at the cost of weakening the key funding source, the teacher intern program.

A conceptual base for the study of this individual consortium is needed, one that would be applicable in this specific situation but could also be generalized to be used by other consortia facing similar problems. Recommendations regarding this need are welcome.

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